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ABSTRACT

Articles in this special issue of the newsletter of the Adult Education Interest Section of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) address the following topics related to women and adult literacy: (1) dealing with failures in tutoring (E. Radick); (2) color as a key to teaching literacy (J. Langelier); (3) a preschool home study program for Hispanic families that involves parents (C. Weir); (4) a course for Southeast Asian women that integrates an entrepreneurial project with language and math instruction (J. Treat); and (5) a project bringing together sixth-grade Hispanic girls, their mothers, and notable successful Hispanic women from the community as role models (P. Rigg). Professional association news and book reviews are also included. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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Women and Adult Literacy. Adult Education Newsletter

Volume 17, Number 1 July, 1990

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ADULT EDUCATION
NEWSLETTER
The Official Publication of the Interest Section
Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

July, 1990 Vol. XVII No. 1

TUTORING MARIE: WHERE TO FROM HERE?

by
Esther Gerstenfeld Radick

In "Petra" Rigg (1985) presents a detailed account of how a project to teach a Mexican woman to read in Spanish failed because the changes that literacy would bring to her life were too threatening for the men in her life, and thus for her, to handle. Though Petra expressed this problem early on, her tutors did not hear what she was saying until it was too late; she had left the vicinity.

This article impressed me greatly when I first read it as part of an instructional reading course I took. The following semester, when I tutored a Haitian woman in ESL to meet requirements for another course, I began to feel I was living Petra's saga. As with Petra, my project with Marie (all names are changed to protect anonymity) ultimately failed and left me with many unanswered questions. As with Petra, it was an important man in Marie's life—her husband Pierre—who made his presence and lack of support felt. As with Petra, I did not see what was coming until it was too late.

To begin, I must admit that a certain class bias colored my initial approach and attitude to Marie. People who knew us both had recommended that I work with her when I was looking for someone to tutor for my class project. Marie, Pierre, and their children had fled Haiti rather precipitously in the wake of the upheavals there. Both were highly educated and had held important positions in their country. They were accustomed to comfort, status, and respect.

Continued on page 6, TUTORING MARIE

SEE YOU IN NEW YORK
MARCH 24-28, 1991

RAINBOW TO LITERACY

Judy Langelier

Color is a universal form of expression. For a group of non-literate Haitian women, color was the key to teaching literacy at the workplace. Color became the basis of a common bond formed between this group of women and their teacher.

This ESOL Workplace Literacy Program was piloted in the laundry department of C.A. Muer Restaurant Corp. by the School Board of Palm Beach County, Dept of Adult & Community Education. Classes met two hours a day, twice a week. The goals of the course were to learn the language and concepts specific to the job, some social language, and basic literacy skills.

continued on page 7, RAINBOW

SPECIAL ISSUE
women and adult literacy
Pat Rigg, Editor

This issue of the AEIS Newsletter focuses on women and adult literacy. We are fortunate to have articles dealing with a range of issues that affect ESOL women as they become new readers and writers, and affect the tutors and teachers working with them. Two articles--Rainbow and Women's Work--deal with literacy as part of a workplace program. Two--Parents and Mother-Daughter -- focus on intergenerational programs.

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LETTER FROM THE ASSOCIATE CHAIR

Sheila Acevedo Palm Beach County, Florida

Dear Colleagues:

Thank you for your confidence and support in electing me as your Associate Chair. Here is a little bit about me: I have been a member of TESOL since the mid-1970s, and have been active in adult education and refugee concerns since 1982. Prior to that, I worked in elementary education with migrant children. In addition, I have experience with intensive English programs, secondary ESOL education, and administration and supervision. From 1985-89, I directed workplace ESOL adult projects in Orange County, Florida. Currently, I am the ESOL Specialist for Adult and Community Education in Palm Beach County, Florida. My most recent work includes directing projects for the development of ESOL Adult Education Curriculum frameworks for the state of Florida, a model survival/coping skills curriculum for pre-literacy through the Mainstream English Language Training (MELT) Student Performance Level (SPL) V, and Freirean-based primary language support pre-literacy projects in Spanish and Haitian-Creole. Additionally, our district has six workplace ESOL programs and several more in the planning stage. Finally, I am developing a model secondary ESOL program for non-literate and literate students which will begin August 1990. This model will include options for Vocational ESOL and in-school General Educational Development (GED) for young adults.

In view of the influx of new immigrants in Florida from Central America, Haiti, South America, Europe, Asia, and the Soviet Union, our program seems to be a microcosm of current trends throughout the USA and the world. Many of our students are entering with low level literacy skills in English due to the unavailability of educational opportunities in their homelands. Due to recent economic and workforce trends in the USA, Canada, Asia, and Europe, work- place ESOL programs are fast beacoming common throughout the world. Women are entering the work-force outside the home in larger percentages than ever. This affects not only labor and educational trends, but also the community and cultural traditions of our students. Issues such as childcare, latch key children, and young people in the workforce, are among those that we as the leaders in ESOL and literacy education must address in order to better assist our students in their quest for education. Cooperative efforts among TESOL professionals are emerging: among these are intergenerational programs, dropout prevention, family literacy, and social concerns (such as health and parenting).

Within AEIS, members are studying these issues and are developing models, programs, and pilot projects which will help all of us to better serve our students. However, in order to provide the best quality education, we must also find the means to create programs which support professionalism. Many adult educators work part-time without benefits in situations that do not permit class leveling, planning time, or inservice activities. These issues can only affect the quality of services which we provide. As we grow in our professional careers, it is up to us to discover and implement models which will allow our colleagues to enjoy professional support and recognition within the classroom regardless of the type of program which is being provided.

At TESOL in New York, we will be discussing and sharing ideas on all of these topics. Please come prepared to share your solutions to issues of part-time employment, literacy, intergenerational learning, and ESOL at the workplace. The answers are within us. Let us enter the new decade as problem solvers and networkers of information. We can do so, not only through TESOL workshops, but also through the AEIS Newsletter. Let us know what is working in your adult education program.

Sheila Acevedo, Palm Beach County
Adult & Community Education
3970 RCA Blvd. Suite 7016
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410-4283

ADULT LITERACY CONFERENCES

Sept. 13-16 Pittsburgh, PA
Responsibilities for Literacy
contact MLA, 10 Astor Place, NY, NY 10003

Oct.18-21 Vancouver, British Columbia
Literacy 2000: The Next Ten Years
contact G. Malnarich, Douglas College
Box 2503 New Westminster, BC V3L 5B2

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Suzanne Leibman, William Rainey HarperCollege

In AEIS, collaboration, participation, and sharing power are essential. With them come two obligations: thanks and pushing. First, thanks to the presenters of AEIS sessions at TESOL '90. Thanks to all the readers, planners, business meeting participants and volunteers there too. Special thanks to our past chair, Gail Weinstein-Shr, our newsletter editor and past past chair, Pat Rigg, Joyce Winchell Namde, our nominee to TESOL's Exec. Board, and Linda Mrowicki, our rep to TESOL's nominating committee. Thanks for the present and future too: thanks to the 30-plus readers who read and ranked 170 abstracts for TESOL '91. Some of the people already deserving thanks as they work for our future include Julia Spinthourakis and a nominating committeewho will identify members interested in serving as Associate AEIS Chair and as our nominees to TESOL-wide positions. Elaine Bausch and others are working on a survey of part-timers in adult education; Jessica Dilworth is drafting new forms for proposal evaluation.

Now comes the pushing: take some power by participating in IS activities. Without you, we aren't. Read this newsletter and let Pat know your reaction; then write something for the next one. Send Julia nominations; send Jessica ideas (PCAE, Liberty Learning Center, 501 S Liberty St. Tucson, AZ 85706), send me comments about part-time working conditions. If you can come to TESOL '91, volunteer. TESOL has established small IS grants for special projects. This year we hope to receive funding for our survey and newsletter, but let me knowwhat projects you think should be funded. The address and phone number are below. In advance, thank you.

Suzanne Leibman
WR Harper College ESL Dept.
1200 W Algonquin Road Palatine, IL 60067
(708) 397-3000, ext 226 (708) 397-0433 FAX

March 21-23, 1991 Banff, Alberta
The 1991 IRA North American Conference on Adult and Adolescent Literacy
contact Barbara Onstad, Program Chair
Saskatchewan Education
1855 Victoria Ave.
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3V5 Canada

PARENTS IN PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Carla-Marie Weir
Bilingual Ed/ESL Dept.
Dallas Independent School District

"Mami, when is the teacher going to bring me more homework?" ask the children participating in the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY). The "homework" is a packet of materials, games and books that the family receives from a paraprofessional who visits regularly to help families prepare 4 and 5 year old children for school. The families in this program live in a Hispanic *barrio* in west Dallas: they are all low-income and the children are considered "at risk" in terms of academic success, health, social welfare, and employment.

In an attempt to break the cycle of poverty and low education, the HIPPY program works with parents to help them help their youngsters, and at the same time builds a greater sense of community and of choice among the parents. HIPPY staff also provide information for parents to continue their own education. In the Dallas program, almost all of the parents are now enrolled in ESL classes; one mother has been accepted into an ESL/Electronics class at a technical institute; and three mothers are working on their GEDs. The HIPPY program brings the families together in meetings where they can discuss how to read to their children, as well as such topics as discipline. At these meetings, the HIPPY paraprofessional, herself a member of the community and the *barrio*, offers information, often using herself as an example of a mother who has learned some better ways to feed, teach, and help her children.

One mother spoke for the other caretakers—mothers, grandmothers, aunts—when she said, "I feel so much more useful to my children. I grew up picking corn on a ranch with 10 brothers and sisters. There was work to be done and no time for school. I think my children will go to college."

The HIPPY program is international: for more information, contact HIPPY Program Center for the Child, 5323 W 23rd St., NY, NY, 10010 ATTN: Mariam Westheimer.

WOMEN'S WORK

by Jamie Treat

Catholic Social Services of Albuquerque, Inc.

As a work study/ESL instructor, my job a few years ago was to develop some kind of cottage industry through which refugee women from Cambodia and Laos, all widows with dependent children, could learn and practice survival and vocational English. This included becoming familiar with employment practices (such as filling in time sheets, meeting deadlines, cashing checks) and earning something to supplement their minimal family incomes.

At first, I thought we could market Southeast Asian needlework, but then I discovered that these women were farmers, and only one of them had ever embroidered. Together we discovered a craft that none of us had any previous experience with, but one we felt was right for our class: we made hand-printed greeting cards, taking the designs from the floral patterns of the women's sarongs. We used carved linoleum blocks to print the cards. The business involved not only creating the cards, but creating a system for marketing them.

The class met three mornings a week, and our format varied to meet the needs of our business. Some days were basically production sessions, while others were planning and/or discussion sessions. We focused on the language and math that we needed for our business. Because there was a variety of tasks requiring a broad range of English proficiency, every student could work at her own level. For example, students with less English proficiency could assist with taking inventory, following directions to "count the envelopes; put rubber bands around groups of ten," and students with more proficiency could report "We need envelopes. We don't have any cards with Design #3." Numerous literacy tasks at different levels included addressing envelopes, sorting and interpreting order forms, writing receipts, filling in inventory charts, sales reports, reading paychecks.

The English "lessons" were integrated into what was meaningful and important to us. More, each person contributed something special: Kay was the fastest printer; Khoeung was a natural salesperson; Hai could always find a better way to do something; Minh kept everyone laughing. All of us learned a great deal from our class, our business— Mekong River Cards—and each other.

REVIEWS

Voices Rising: a Bulletin about Women and Popular Education is published three times a year in English, Spanish, and French by the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) Women's Program.
The Jan. 1990 issue, Vol. 4, No. 1, is entitled The Literacy Issue: Feminist Perspectives on Reading and Writing.

In examining literacy in the International Year of Literacy, this fine magazine has gathered articles from women around the world—South Africa, Chile, Greece, Haiti, Mexico, Canada, and other nations. The writers explore how literacy programs can address some of the problems facing women who want to become literate, often letting the women students speak for themselves.

THE WOMEN'S KIT, published by the Participatory Research group and the ICAE Women's Program, is a series of eight booklets written by women students about their lives. Titles include: Women's Days; Childcare; Working Conditions; and Women Working Together. The authors' goal is "to encourage women to engage in discussion and critical thinking about their lives."
Both Voices Rising and The Women's Kit are available from PRG,308- 394 Euclid Ave, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6G 2S9.

CONVERGENCE: special issue on women and non-formal adult education, vol. 11, no. 4, 1988.
ICAE, 720 Bathurst St., Suite 500, Toronto, Ontario Canada M5S 2R4.
Articles focus on non-formal education programs for women in different nations, both industrialized and not, and explore how these programs sometimes affect women negatively, and how they might be more empowering.

NEW AUTHORS

One reward of editing this issue of the AEIS newsletter has been the chance to encourage teachers to write and to publish their first works. It is especially fitting that the topic of women and adult literacy elicited manuscripts from women tutors and teachers. My thanks to each contributor.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK
IT'S A WONDERFUL TOWN
24-28 March 1991

IS THIS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER?

Pat Rigg, Editor

Last March, the Interest Section Council representatives Cathy Day, Fred Genesee, and Scott Enright informed us that Interest Section Newsletters would a) no longer be allowed to carry advertising and b) would be restricted to two mailings a year of not more than 16 pages total a year.

The AEIS newsletter began themed issues with the last issue on Amnesty, but will probably not be able to continue this under the new restrictions. There are funds available for special projects, but I have no time to write a grant proposal in order to get the necessary funds for this newsletter. (Actually, like most volunteer editors in TESOL, I find it hard enough to find time to get the paper out.) The AEIS membership has not indicated whether

a) it really wants a newsletter and,

b) if so, what it wants covered.

This is a request to you, the readers, to let the AEIS officers and the newsletter editor know what you want.

I have been told that the TESOL journals can easily replace the IS newsletters. Maybe so. Let's compare newsletters to journals: what does each do best? The TESOL journals are edited by university academics and are refereed journals: this means that manuscripts submitted to them must be reviewed by at least two reviewers, usually university academics, and they are judged in part on their scholarly merit, one aspect of which is the quality and quantity of references cited. The focus is on contributing to the knowledge base of the profession in general, and the articles must be of interest to the general membership. There is often a lag of six months or more from submission to publication. The new TESOL Matters plans one short column from each Interest Section.

The IS newsletters, on the other hand, are often edited by people outside universities, and have no editorial review board. The focus is on contributing information to a special interest group, not to the general membership; this means a newsletter can focus on topics that are of current interest to some members (such as amnesty), and can get information out relatively quickly. It also allows for direct communication from the IS officers to IS members.

WHY FOCUS ON WOMEN & LITERACY?

Pat Rigg

In the USA, although not in Canada or in many "Third World" nations, gender issues have been largely ignored in adult literacy programs for native speakers of English and for speakers of English as a new language, even though women are both prime users and employees of literacy programs, both native English and ESOL. The majority of adult ESOL programs have mostly female staff, often part-timers who have no fringe benefits, and volunteers who receive no remuneration.

There has been little research in this area. The work of Gilligan (1982)on women's morality and of Belenky et al (1986) on women's ways of knowing have dealt only with English speakers. Feminist theory suggests that adult education for women needs methodologies quite different from the traditional tranmission model: we should consider a peer model stressing connections among members, using oral histories, intergenerational projects, and participatory curriculum.

This issue of the AEIS Newsletter is a very small start at very large and complex issues. Perhaps other TESOL publications will be persuaded by this example to address some of those.

NEWSLETTER ANNOUNCED

Macey Taylor, Laura Perez, and Virginia Nelson of TESOL's CALL announce a new monthly newsletter, aimed at computer assisted language learning in education, and focused on practical classroom activities. Articles, reviews, tips and hints are solicited.

Prices:
$20/year US ($22/Canada
$29/other countries).
Computer Assisted Learning
2634 East Malvern St., Tucson, AZ 85716
(602) 326-7265.

EDITORIAL, cont. from previous column:

What do YOU want? Do you want this newsletter to continue? Do you want it smaller (one plan cuts newsletters to eight pages a year)? Do you want different content? Let us know, and let your TESOL Executive Board representatives know. Does it matter enough to write? If not, you're sending a clear message by remaining silent.

Pat Rigg, AEIS Editor
1303 N Walnut
Tucson, AZ 85712 USA

TUTORING MARIE, cont. from page 1

In the USA, their lack of English proficiency, coupled with the nation-specificity of their professions (especially Pierre, an attorney) and their precarious legal status forced them into menial jobs. Marie now cleans other people's houses; Pierre grabs whatever he can. Especially for him, the economic hardships and loss of status have been bitter blows.

As my academic background was primarily in French, I welcomed the opportunity to work with Marie and to practice some of my rusty French. I felt a great kinship with this bright, warm, energetic woman. After working with her on different language exercises, I concluded that her greatest problem in English was a lack of confidence. She knew a great deal more than she would allow herself to express freely.

The lessons went along quite well until one evening when I, coming straight from school, went to Marie's house without having intercepted a phone message canceling the session. Marie had a migraine, and I could almost see her tangible pain.

Pierre cornered me in conversation. First, he thanked me for teaching his wife English, because he did not have the time to do it. We spoke French; we were definitely on Pierre's turf. I later learned that, from all reports, his English is much weaker than his wife's. I found his thanks rather curious. Pierre continued to ask me a great many personal questions. He seemed especially fascinated by my being divorced and by what he, as an attorney, regarded as my poor settlement. I found this conversation bizarre, baffling, and extremely bothersome. I was uncomfortable being grilled by Pierre, but it didn't occur to me to object to his questions until later, when I mentally reviewed the conversation. Then I realized that Pierre had been putting me in my place, so to speak, and my place was not a welcome one in that household.

When I described this episode to my class a week or so later, the two other students working with adult women remarked that they had had similar experiences: in both cases, their students' husbands interfered with the lessons.

Where to from here? If an important man in a woman's life begins blocking her access to English

continued on next column, MARIE

MARIE, continued from previous column

lessons (or to other education), what should the instructor do? I am asking the question without having any answers to suggest. It seems clear that ESL, like literacy, can be a means of empowerment. For any family or couple, the empowering of one member affects everyone's equilibrium. As the woman is often the less powerful member of a couple or family, her empowerment can seem very threatening to a status quo that includes male dominance.

When I talk about Marie's case, people assume that she came fom a poor, uneducated background. But unlike Petra, Marie was no migrant fruit picker who had never been inside a schoolroom. Though she is currently in financial distress, she and her husband were well educated and highly privileged. So clearly the dynamic of empowering a woman being viewed as a threat is not restricted to poor and uneducated families. This dynamic is, I suggest, much more widespread than heretofore recognized. As teachers of ESL and of literacy, and as teachers of the Maries and Petras of the world, we need to address the question: Where do we go from here?

REFERENCE

Rigg, P. (1985) Petra: Learning to read at 45. Literacy: The Movement for Canadian Literacy 10(1): 3-10.
Reprinted in Journal of Education 167 (1): 393-97.

JOYCE NAMDE
CANDIDATE FOR BOARD

Joyce Namde's name will appear on your ballot as an candidate for Interest Section representative to the Executive Board. Joyce was Associate Chair and Chair of AEIS 1986-87 and worked hard and successfully to reinvigorate our IS. She served on the Sociopolitical Concerns Committee and worked both there and in Arizona against the Official English legislation. She was President of Arizona TESOL, and was recognized in 1987 with the Teacher of the Year Award. Her service to TESOL at both national and affiliate levels has been exemplary.

MOTHER-DAUGHTER PROJECT

Pat Rigg

Judy Meyer and others in Dallas Independent School District noticed that Hispanic girls were dropping out of school even faster and younger than Hispanic boys. The girls' goals were quite modest: they hoped to get married and have babies, but did not indicate they also wanted to become a doctor, lawyer, teacher, or executive. So Meyer and her colleagues started a Mother/Daughter Project designed to reduce drop-out and increase enrollment by these girls in the high schools' college-track curriculum.

The project brings together Hispanic sixth-grade girls, their mothers, and notable Hispanic women of the community—such as university professors, business owners, and so on. The visiting women talk about their jobs, describing not only what they do, but how they prepared academically in both high school and university. They are role models of what Hispanic women can be and do.

The project also helps communication between mothers and daughters. During the school year, mothers and daughters meet with Hispanic teachers and counselors on Saturday mornings: at first, they meet separately, each group discussing the question: *What would you like to talk with your mother/daughter about, but are afraid to?* The groups focus on how to communicate with the daughter or mother about the topic.

The last meeting of the year is a trip to the local university, meeting with advisors from admissions and from the financial aid office; they explain to the girls and their mothers very clearly the kinds of academic preparation in high school they suggest, and they explain how to apply for and receive financial assistance to attend the university.

Meyer finds this relatively low cost program excellent at improving communication between the girls and their mothers, at developing the girls' interest in higher education, and at raising the mothers' awareness of possibilities open to them as well as to their daughters.

For further information, contact Judy Meyer at Dallas Independent School District,
5000 S Oakland Ave, Dallas, TX 75215.

RAINBOW, continued from page 1

The laundry department was composed of about 30 employees: the general manager was Haitian; the line supervisor and the payroll clerk were American; and all other laundry employees were Haitian. Two of the lead people who were Haitian stepped in to translate whenever necessary. Staff meetings and orientations were conducted in Creole by the general manager. The laundry department functioned quite well under this arrangement. The ESOL class was a benefit offered to the employees, but the need for English to communicate on the job was minimal.

Classes met pre-and post-shift. The laundry came to a standstill during this time. The women were not paid for their class time, but received a 10% salary increase upon successful completion of the course.

Twenty-three women registered for the course. Their educational backgrounds varied significantly. A few had never before had the opportunity to attend school, and one had completed high school in Haiti. A few had studied some ESOL in the USA, but most had not. Most of the women lacked basic math skills in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division; and many could not count money or tell time.

Classes met in a large warehouse area where there was no air conditioning and the windows did not open. There was no ventilation to remove the hot air, but there was a fan which helped to circulate the air. In the Florida climate, even in February, this was an uncomfortable situation. By May it was unbearable. The make-shift classroom that was set up in the warehouse area consisted of two picnic tables with crisp starched frosty blue linen tablecloths, a few extra chairs, a flip chart, a fan, and books, notebooks, pencils and colored markers.

On the first day of class, many more women came than had pre-registered and had taken the pre-test. On the second day of class still more women came forth to participate. Literacy workbooks were issued on the second day of class, and the students were instructed to trace a series of dotted lines from top to bottom, left to right using their pencils. The students looked at the teacher rather curiously. The teacher demonstrated the exercise again, using a red marker to demonstrate. The students immediately went to work, using a different color for each line, top to bottom, left to right, stopping

continued on page 8, RAINBOW

RAINBOW, continued from page 7

to admire each other's color scheme. The women's abilities to use color became the foundation for our class.

Students continued to attend class, progressing in the use of color as a key to learning. About the 8th or 9th week, there was a slump in attendance. (Statistics in Florida show that 9 weeks is the ideal length for an ESOL workplace program. Students/employees initially need short, attainable educational goals.)

In May a graduation ceremony was planned. The company invited all the students, their teacher, the ESOL specialist, their supervisor and general manager, the vice-president of the company and the director of human resources to have lunch at Charlie's Crab in Palm Beach, one of the restaurants the women kept supplied with table linens. The women dressed in beautifully colored dresses. The teacher presented them with colorful gifts and certificates. A photographer took pictures of the group. After the ceremony, everyone ordered from the menu and prepared for a delicious lunch. As they unfolded their crisply starched napkins, everyone smiled at each other, and asked when the next class would begin. While the graduating students enjoyed their meal at this elegant restaurant, the managers discussed the possibility of adding color to the white walls of the laundry.

As a result of this pilot project, the company plans to offer an ESOL workplace program in each of their six restaurants in the area, and to continue the program in the laundry department. Students will be given paid release time to attend the classes. In addition, renovations have now been completed in the "classroom" area of the laundry where a new ventilation system was installed.

Judy Langelier is the ESOL Resource Teacher for the School Board of Palm Beach County, Dept. of Adult and Community Education. She piloted this ESOL Workplace Literacy program.

TESOL, 1600 Cameron Street, Suite 300, Alexandria, Virginia 22314, USA
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